

## **Preschool For All (PFA) Demonstration Project Questions and Answers – April 18, 2005**

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### **Acronyms**

- ABCD            ABCD Constructing Connections (ECE facilities)
- API             Academic Performance Index
- CARES          Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards
- CCFC           California Children and Families Commission
- CDE            California Department of Education
- ECE             Early Care and Education
- FCCH           Family Child Care Home(s)
- PFA             Preschool for All

### **Workforce**

**1) Q: Several county commissions/school districts are considering the option of providing bonuses to teachers who have BA's and other PFA requirements that would increase their compensation to be roughly equivalent to the salaries of kindergarten teachers as an alternative to raising their salaries. From the standpoint of the First 5 PFA Demonstration Project, is this okay?**

*A: Yes – at this time, we are working for parity in compensation that could be provided as bonuses that are linked to increased education levels. Hopefully, in the future “parity in compensation” would mean parity in salary and benefits with Kindergarten teachers who have comparable qualifications.*

**2) Q: One commission is considering placing certificated teachers who are school district employees in family child care homes for 3 hours each day. They might consider the same approach to embedding PFA in private centers as well. In that way, they could ensure that the children were getting PFA quality services without having to change the whole structure of these programs. Would this be acceptable?**

A: Yes – placing a certificated teacher with ECE training in centers/homes to work exclusively with the preschool children would be an acceptable ‘pilot project’ strategy to test and determine if it provides positive results for children. The overall preschool program would need to meet the other PFA criteria as well (e.g., group size).

**3) Q: Can you refer us to any preschool models in which they have successfully addressed the compensation parity issues, unions, etc.?**

A: We are in the process of checking how this has been addressed in other states where access to preschool has been greatly expanded but not made universally available overnight. Also, we are checking with some school districts in California that have established preschool programs staffed by teachers with parity with K-12 teachers in Title 1 schools, but not necessarily in other schools within the same district. We are also checking with other commissions that have established workgroups on this topic.

It is important to stress that the PFA Demonstration grants will be just that – demonstrations. School systems frequently receive demonstration grants, and our technical assistance team will research how they manage to implement them.

Finally, for purposes of the PFA Demonstration Grants, First 5 CCFC has stated that parity may be addressed by providing **bonuses** (as distinct from salary increases) that are linked to increased education levels, with the long-term goal of providing parity in salary and benefits with public school teachers who have comparable qualifications.

**4) Q. What is the link between PFA Demonstration Projects and CARES Programs?**

Counties that participate in PFA Planning and Demonstration Projects need to coordinate the efforts of PFA and CARES. The Degree Track in CARES is required for PFA Planning and Demonstration counties that choose to participate in CARES. This Track is separate from the Permit Track to emphasize that to achieve quality care, classroom teachers also need degrees. PFA Planning counties with a separate system, besides or in addition to CARES, for raising the educational standards of PFA participants must demonstrate how the programs will link and collaborate.

During the first five years of the CARES project, 47 County Commissions joined the effort with the matching funds supporting local programs addressing professional development and retention of family child care providers and center teaching staff and directors through incentives and supports. The five-year pilot phase of the project was successful with approximately \$155.2 million total investment in the project from July 2000 – June 2005. Based on evaluation findings from the pilot phase, continuation of the project was approved by the State Commission with an additional investment of up to \$30 million for July 2005 through January 2009 with several program modifications.

### **Program**

**5) Q: Do the “reduced special education referrals” in the child and family outcomes on page 17, mean kindergarten referrals, i.e., that children will have been assessed and begin services prior to kindergarten?**

*A: Yes. The plan is that early screening, assessment, and intervention in the preschool period will reduce the need for placements in special education once children enter kindergarten. And yes, early screening, assessment and intervention services for all preschool children are included in the criteria for the First 5 PFA Demonstration Projects.*

**6) Q: Criterion 11, item 2 reads, “contribute to spaces that meet *entry-level* standards by funding incremental levels of quality improvements that advance towards PFA quality standards (e.g., salary/benefit schedule). Are the *entry level* standards those outlined in Criterion 5?**

*A: Entry level preschool program criteria are those outlined in Criterion #1 - 5. Criterion #6 provides information on the minimum teacher qualifications for beginning PFA sites:  
" ... State Preschool Program Title 5 standards and rates in the area are used as a minimum, and rates move to parity with K/Elementary teachers when qualifications are achieved (i.e., salary/benefits schedule)... "*

### **Preschool Spaces**

**7) Q: What is the timeframe for defining a ‘new’ space? If school districts or other funders have made a commitment to invest in new spaces in late 2004, and the spaces do not open up until the spring of 2005, can the county commission still request up to \$1200 toward these new spaces? The issue is that some counties thought they needed to get the financial investment commitment for this year in order to meet First 5 CCFC criteria for PFA Demonstration Project applications that previously were scheduled to be due in January 2005. Now that the timeframe for turning in the applications has been extended, will these hard-won investments still count as ‘new’ for purposes of the PFA Demonstration Project applications?**

*A: Given that the PFA Planning Projects began in 2004, we would consider any ‘new’ preschool spaces created after July 2004 to be eligible for the ‘new preschool spaces’ level of First 5 CCFC funding. The time period for the PFA Demonstration Projects will be July 2004 – November 2010. Of course, First 5 CCFC’s funding contribution for new and enhanced preschool spaces would begin after the PFA Demonstration Projects receive First 5 CCFC approval (scheduled for November 2005).*

**8) Q: Must an applicant for the PFA Demonstration Project plan to serve at least 1000 four year olds in order for the plan to qualify? Or can the PFA Demonstration Project**

**plan to serve 1000 four year olds in school district(s) attendance areas, and as close to 1000 preschoolers as possible in a citywide or countywide plan?**

*A: The PFA Demonstration Project needs to plan to serve 1000 four year olds in school district(s) attendance areas, and as close to 1000 preschoolers as possible in a citywide or countywide plan. One of the purposes of the PFA Demonstration Project is to “demonstrate the impact of voluntary preschool for all 4 year olds (or for 3 and 4 year olds) in a limited number of counties, cities, and school districts representing California’s language, cultural, and geographic diversity.” The criteria were developed so the PFA Demonstration Projects had a system-wide impact of sufficient size to be meaningful. Therefore, the PFA Demonstration Projects need to be available to all four year olds in a school district(s) with at least 1000 four year olds, or in a city or in a county with as close to 1000 4 year olds (or 3 and 4 year olds) as possible.*

**9) Q: Underserved and High Priority Communities - How can we mix achievement levels and have projects located in underserved/low API communities?**

*A: The goal is to have a mix of student achievement levels in the system (i.e., district(s), city, county) of the PFA Demonstration Project over time. It is important to begin in areas with underserved and high priority communities, then to add other school communities with higher APIs. The goal is to make PFA available to all children, regardless of educational or income status, within an area that includes a significant portion of low API schools and underserved communities.*

**10) Q: Are we using at the current Low API scores, or those that were in place when the school readiness zones were selected?**

*A: Please use the current API scores.*

**11) Q: If we choose to apply for a “county-wide” demonstration project, do each of the PFA sites need to be connected to a low API school or SR site?**

*A: No, but the PFA programs need to start first in the low API school communities and SR Program communities – and then add other, higher API school communities.*

**12) Q: Could a PFA Demonstration Project provide preschool programs to a subset of the school district(s), city or countywide system? For example, could the PFA Demonstration Project serve only the high-priority school attendance areas?**

*A: No - all four year olds in the school district(s) or city or county level ‘system’ need to have access to preschool programs that meet the First 5 PFA Demonstration Project criteria. However, the roll-out scheduled needs to start in high-priority (API 1-5) school communities before adding services in higher API school communities.*

**13) Q: May PFA Demonstration Projects include children who are 5 years old, but are not attending kindergarten because they are not yet eligible since their birth date is after 12/2 ?**

A: Yes.

**14) Q: Do you have any definitions of “family child care networks”? Are they expecting the CDE model and regulations, or will Head Start or other network models be acceptable?**

*A: A family child care network is technically a cluster of licensed providers working under the supervision of a central administering agency that contracts with the state of California to provide subsidized child care and development services in home care settings. They must meet the same Title V requirements as do center-based programs. Meeting Title V requirements is one of the entry criteria for PFA. However, so long as they meet these standards, other network models, such as those administered by Head Start, will be considered.*

**15) Q: How will diverse private early care and education (ECE) programs be able to meet the high quality standards of PFA and apply to participate in the PFA Demonstration Projects? For current private ECE programs to be able to provide high-quality, free, and voluntary preschool programs, can these ECE programs receive funding equal to a ‘new’ space? In the First 5 criteria, there are two categories: ‘upgraded’ spaces and ‘new’ spaces. The total cost of providing a high quality preschool program for at least 3 hours daily in programs that do not have other public subsidies for the spaces is, on average, as much as the cost of a new space.**

**Note: While it may seem that investing PFA funds in private ECE programs is no cheaper than developing entirely new high quality preschool spaces, there are some potential benefits:**

- **savings resulting from not having to invest in new facilities**
- **offering high quality preschool programs in diverse settings that allow for parental choice**
- **being able to embed PFA in full-day programs**
- **not having to transport children with working families from PFA to another arrangement**

*A: One of the goals of the First 5 PFA Demonstration Projects is to improve the quality of preschool programs by offering high-quality, free and voluntary preschool programs in diverse settings, including licensed private ECE programs. For the purposes of the PFA Demonstration Projects, current private ECE programs would qualify as ‘new’ (publicly funded) preschool spaces in the First 5 CCFC funding schedule and would need to offer a free, voluntary preschool programs that meets PFA quality criteria.*

**16) Q: Which spaces would be eligible to receive PFA “expanded” quality funds?**

*A: All current and new publicly funded preschool spaces would be eligible for 'expanded' quality funds. Funds are not to supplant, rather supplement public funds, and to balance the outlay of funds for new high-quality, free, and voluntary preschools.*

**17) Q: Is the anticipated model one in which the entire private preschool would have to participate with 100% free, publicly funded spaces, or can we consider a model in which we are expanding a portion of the spaces with publicly funded dollars while some are supported by private pay?**

*A: The preschools included in the PFA Demonstration Project need to be free and voluntary (100%) during the three-hour preschool program. The intent is to move whole organizations into PFA when they are ready. Prior to that readiness 'step' of becoming part of the First 5 PFA Demonstration Project (i.e., receive First 5 CCFC funds), the mix would work.*

### **Budget**

**18) Q: First 5 CCFC is expecting to contribute an average of \$350 for upgraded spaces and \$1200 for new spaces. Assuming a county comes up with the rest of the funding for those upgraded and new spaces, is there any way they can apply for any First 5 PFA Demonstration Project funds to offset the cost of facilities? If the answer is ‘no,’ how will they get ‘credit’ in the PFA Demonstration Project review process for their considerable local investments in new facilities?**

*A: Everyone gets credit for all funds that contribute to high quality preschool spaces through all available sources. However, First 5 CCFC funds cannot be used for capital expenditures such as preschool facilities. We are supporting technical assistance for preschool facilities through the ABCD partnership with the Packard Foundation.*

**19) Q: Can the First 5 CCFC funding contribution through the PFA Demonstration Projects be used for administrative, evaluation, and other program costs?**

*A: Yes – the First 5 CCFC funding contributes to the total cost of new and enhanced preschool spaces, including all costs related to providing high-quality, free and voluntary preschool spaces that are accessible to all four year olds in the attendance area of the school district(s), city, or county (except capital expenditures, such as facilities costs).*

**20) Q: Although we will propose our own budgets, is it expected that PFA funding will increase over the 5 years, to include cost of living?**

*A: The First 5 CCFC PFA grants will not be augmented to include cost of living adjustment; the First 5 CCFC contribution level is set for the duration of the PFA Demonstration Projects. It is up to the County Commission to provide any needed cost-of-living adjustments in the PFA Demonstration Project budget when the application is submitted. In the PFA Toolkit, a method is provided to adjust for inflation (2.5 percent per year), based on information from the Congressional Budget Office.*

**21) Q: Comprehensive services – has the funding needed to pay for the impact of PFA on SR agencies been factored into the PFA portion of the funding (i.e. \$350/\$1200 per space + “match”)? Or, are there separate funds to help pay for this?**

*A: The First 5 CCFC funds are intended to serve as a contribution toward the cost of upgrading existing and creating new preschool spaces. It is acceptable to include the cost of developmental screening as a part of this project, but First 5 California is not providing separate funds for the screening. Furthermore, the First 5 California PFA funds are not intended to pay for the full scope of comprehensive services, such as health services, dental services, etc. that some children require. First 5 CCFC encourages County Commissions to use other funding sources (e.g., MediCal, Healthy Families, and Head Start) to finance or provide the comprehensive services for the children who need them.*

**22) Q: Please clarify the expected uses for the \$10M to support quality improvements for the First 5 PFA Demonstration Projects such as providing incentives for workforce development, administration and monitoring, training and technical assistance, and evaluation (with County match). Will these funds be used for incentives, administration, monitoring, etc., support that goes directly to the counties, or will it fund parallel state-wide efforts?**

*A: The \$10 million is reserved for state-initiated activities including statewide efforts in workforce development, monitoring, and training and technical assistance. As these activities develop, some funds will probably be made available for special projects in selected communities. In that case, counties may be asked to provide local match if they wish to participate. However, these activities would be in addition to, not instead of, the administration and evaluation activities directly connected to the PFA Demonstration Grants.*

**23) Q: Please clarify what is expected of County Commissions regarding policy and fiscal ‘commitment’ for the PFA Demonstration Projects:**

*A: First 5 will be looking for policy commitments that document the locality’s commitment to system-wide implementation – that is, either throughout an entire school district (or districts), or an entire city, or an entire county. First 5 will also be looking for current and future fiscal commitment not only from the commission but also from the school districts and/or city and county officials to make this system-wide implementation possible. The First 5 CCFC funds are not intended, and are not sufficient, to support the full implementation of PFA in the PFA Demonstration Project system; rather they are intended*

*to be a contribution toward the cost of creating the new spaces and upgrading the existing spaces. A locality will not be able to meet the PFA quality standards without committing significantly more funds than the First 5 CCFC is offering toward the cost of new and upgraded preschool spaces.*

### **Evaluation**

**24) Q: Are there any specifics on evaluation, aside from the questions provided in the criteria? For instance, will it be the same/similar evaluation as for SR Programs? Will there be a longitudinal study? If so, for what period of time, and is it the same longitudinal study as the one being prepared for SR Programs?**

*A: Preschool programs participating in the First 5 CCFC PFA Demonstration Projects will be expected to participate in core participant data collection in the statewide evaluation of First 5 programs. First 5 CCFC is considering options for a longitudinal study, and it would most likely be a new study.*

### **Other Questions**

**25) Q: Is there an expectation/requirement from First 5 that the demonstration sites will be the ones for which we have been creating plans?**

*A: It is an expectation, but not a requirement.*